The COMMONWEAL

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The Bishops and the Peace

THE STATEMENT of the Archbishops and Bishops who comprise the administrative board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference lays particular stress upon the necessity for making the world organization which shall attempt to ensure a peaceful world after this war truly universal and democratic. "The international institution must be universal. It must seek to include, with due regard to basic equality of rights, all the nations, large and small, strong and weak. Its constitution must be democratic. While it is reasonable to set up a Security Council with limited membership, this Council must not be an instrument for imperialistic domination by a few powerful nations. Before it every nation must stand on its rights, and not on its power. It must not allow any nation to sit in judgment in its own case. . . . It must . . . provide in its charter for the revision of treaties in the interest of justice and the common good of the international community, as well as for the recognition of a people's coming of age in the family of nations."

This, of course, is not an explicit criticism of what was done at Dumbarton Oaks, but it is clearly an implicit criticism. And it is precisely the criticism which THE COMMONWEAL has consistently made of all schemes for an international organization in which the Big Three (or Four or Five) have a dominant position. We are not at all sure that we can hope for anything better at present, and on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, we would support even the scheme propounded at Dumbarton Oaks. But the moral issue is as the Bishops state it. Particularly important is their insistence on providing a machinery for revision. If we cannot get now a fully acceptable result, such a provision at least leaves the door open for the future, and that is of essential importance. If history proves anything, it proves that life is not static.

Universal Youth Service

A FEW DAYS prior to their statement on the conditions of a lasting peace, the Bishops also declared themselves against any immediate enactment of a universal compulsory military training system, on the ground that the citizens at present absent in the armed forces should have their share in determining what our national policy should be in this matter. The same view was at the same time expressed by the Board of Directors of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. The very next day President Roosevelt discussed this matter at length and expressed his strong approval for the immediate enactment of some system whereby American youth would be obliged to dedicate a year to the nation's service. The President, however, did not specifically state whether this year of service would be spent in military training, whether it would be a sort of compulsory CCC or whether it would include the girls as well as the boys of the nation.

THE COMMONWEAL wishes very specifically to take a stand in this matter. We entirely support the Bishops in believing that it should not be determined immediately. We furthermore are strongly opposed to any obligatory CCC scheme. The CCC on a voluntary basis is an entirely different matter, and might be a useful governmental service. But if it becomes obligatory, it contains within it the seeds of most pernicious regimentation. From a similar expenditure of funds in local school systems, summer camps and athletic organizations, a far more beneficial improvement in physical health is easily possible. If the year's training is to be military, we are opposed to it unless it can be conducted virtually entirely by *reserve* officers, whose livelihoods depend upon some other activity. The world would be incalculably damaged if the United States were to build up a large professional officer corps incidental to the compulsory military training of its youth in peacetime.

ST. CHARLES SEMINARY

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Alternative to Cartels

AMERICAN spokesmen at the International Business Conference at Rye, N. Y., which was attended by delegates of private business from 52 countries, gave the impression that the only choice for the immediate future lay between competition for markets of the old type and restrictive cartels. Naturally our delegates favored competition. Eric Johnston of the Chamber of Commerce put our dominant view succinctly when he said that "trade restrictions result in trade reduction" and that American businessmen "will prosper more from a fair share of a freely expanding trade than from an absolute command of a limited trade."

The strongest advocates of postwar cartels are the British, while delegates from Canada, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Norway and Sweden tended to support the same view. However, the British delegation itself was said to be so sharply split over the cartel-competition issue that it could not agree on its own chairman. There can be no question that America's productive capacity, shipping facilities and relative wealth command the greatest international respect. It is undeniable that this country is slated for the major rôle in the restoration of international trade.

To grant that any device which restricts the production and distribution of goods in the manner of the pre-war cartels is bad does not necessarily imply that unrestrained competition in the world's trade marts is the answer. To begin with, that would be impossible. Russia will trade as a State; Britain gives promise of embarking on a trade policy which is virtually the same. Nazi (and Japanese) expropriation has been so complete that only liberated governments will be in a position to take over things in many industries. Just as the British, encouraged by their experiences with domestic cartels in this war, will resort to international cartels if they are convinced that it is the only way of providing a decent living standard and full employment, so, too, other nations will have recourse to state operation of industry if it appears to be the only means of bringing domestic economic order and the resumption of vital production. It is curious that at the very moment American business leaders are beginning for the first time to favor free trade the conditions in the outside world seem little conducive to it.

More and more it looks as if a *via media* would have to be reached by extension of our reciprocal trade agreements. And the problem here is to make certain that even these do not have a restrictive influence. Possibly provision for frequent revision of commodity quotas which are generous to begin with would help.

Program of Public Works

ONE of the most encouraging news items in recent weeks tells of a five billion dollar building program for the first year of peace in which federal, state and municipal governments would collaborate. Major General Philip B. Fleming, Federal Works Administrator, assures us on his return from a study of post-war plans in Europe that priority will go to construction projects "which can be put into operation quickly, and for which the financing is arranged or in sight." He cites sewer systems, waterworks and hospitals as the sort of project "that will make the largest immediate contribution to community welfare and health." Such a scheme hardly provides an adequate answer to the whole unemployment problem, but it could serve as an important section of an over-all transition scheme. Certainly it is far more useful than dreaming about a new prosperity to be reached by the expansion of our export trade.

What the Soviets Don't Want

THE SIX BASIC principles of Soviet foreign policy recently formulated in Washington by Colonel A. Galin, and published in the Information Bulletin of the Soviet Embassy, are reassuring if they can be taken at their face value. One disquieting aspect of them is the assumption of a "those-who-are-not-for-us-are-against-us" attitude. In politics that is a dangerous and tyrannical position for any great power to take. Colonel Galin said that "the Soviet Union's attitude toward the establishment of diplomatic relations with any country was a businesslike one. It did not go into the question of what régime prevailed in a given country or what home policy it was pursuing, considering that the internal affair of the country itself." However, he added, "the fundamental thing which interested the Soviet Union was the country's attitude toward the aggressor, Hitler Germany, and every country which on this basic question took its stand on the side of the United Nations against Hitler Germany met with a favorable response from the Soviet Union when requesting the establishment of diplomatic relations." Alas, poor Switzerland! But the declaration of abstention from concern with the political systems of other states is more hopeful. It may foreshadow a far happier solution of Russia's relations to the world than the more pessimistic observers have hitherto believed possible.

N.B.

"THERE ARE such things as journals which are, at the same time, Catholic and radical, if you can imagine such a thing . . ." (*Our Sunday Visitor* of Huntington, Ind., November 19, 1944).

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Sea Gulls

IN THE streets round the Fulton Market the seagulls circle with their legs retracted under their tails, they adjust the camber of their wings and when they land to pick up the offal of the fish market they can land on a dime. Their take off is heavy. Now that we know all about airplanes, it is very easy to talk about the mechanics of their flight. There is a language now for flying. The seagulls are more sensitive than airplanes, they have no propellers; you can think of a glider but a glider cannot take off by itself and so before we knew about airplanes it was not easy to know how a seagull flew and therefore mistakes were made, as by Icarus.

This is an old section of New York; they have filled in Fulton Street where the sailing ships once docked and close to the market there is this sort of square which is the size of the slip; the seagulls standing on the edge of the roofs look down on market trucks instead of on the ships; then one of them takes off, then the others; they circle above the trucks; they land and tear at some part of a fish which has fallen from a truck. The ships now are berthed along South Street; they are painted gray; they are armed. The gulls follow them when they move out into the East River, a tugboat straightens them out in the river, the gulls follow the ships as they move down the bay.

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The ships came into New York bringing everyone but the Indians and perhaps the ships brought the gulls or perhaps the gulls were here waiting with the Indians. Unless one is a specialist one can never be sure about that sort of thing. When the ships came in they were filled with expectant people; after a while when they sailed the other way to Europe there were other people, no longer so expectant, who watched them sail, with the gulls soaring above them and in their wake, toward memories of Liverpool, Bremen, Marseilles, Naples. There was no new world; there were only ports all over the world and the passage of ships to and fro binding together all the parts of the world bringing people together. The merchandise also. The ships from China, the complicated pattern of trade. New York with everyone from everywhere in the streets and in all the ports it was the same thing. It had always been that way, the Greeks in Marseilles, the Dutch everywhere, the Spanish everywhere, the Portuguese, the British, the Italians, the French—the Americans also everywhere.

If a man stood looking into the Grand Canyon he would not be thinking about the ships and the ports, or if he were a man of the plains with the wheatfields in summer and then the snows, but there would be nothing anywhere that held a man from the memories of his past, from the travel of the past, from the migrations of the past, and nothing anywhere to prevent his looking down at the stream deep down in the canyon with its waters moving away, or across the plains with the horizon not barring, not closing the plains or whatever mountains lay beyond or whatever seas. The men of the seacoast traveled in ships and it was only that other Americans traveled in a different manner; all Americans always had traveled—the trip to the State Fair, the trip to the World's Fair, the salesman carrying his samples in the rumble of the car, the itinerant preacher, the schoolmistress called to the village school, the young newspaper man moving from paper to paper.

There was nothing ridiculous, there was nothing to be ashamed of when Americans traveled to Europe. Nothing inhabitual. There was nothing wrong about it. There was no need to be self-conscious. The traveling in America was all right and the travel to Europe was all right. We still may travel here, and soon there will be cars, tires and gas, but to Europe not again in our times.

That is finished.

The ship's band used to play and people came to the ship after a dinner-party if they were that kind of people and there was always the story about the man who jumped overboard and swam back to shore and the story about the man who did not know that the ship had sailed and got carried to Europe cabling for money or borrowing it from his friends. There were that kind of people but there were all sorts of other kinds of Americans who were going to see all that they possibly could see of Europe or who were even going to work there. There were the people with guide books and the groups with a leader and lectures every evening. The bar on the ship was like the churches. The bar and the churches are always filled with people but there are a great many people who are not in the churches or in the bar.

All these Americans who used to fill the ships going to Europe have already heard about the airplanes that will take you to Paris for $200 and to Rome for $350 and perhaps it will be all right if they go straight from New York to a hotel in Rome or in Paris and stay in the hotel when they get there. It may be all right if the customers do not go anywhere outside the hotels except of course to a night club. And it will be all right for another kind of client who will want to go to the military cemeteries. There will be the cemeteries and the night clubs. It will be all right also for those who go to Europe with the sole purpose of distributing food or clothes.

Otherwise it is entirely finished.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Why Rural Life?

The good life on the land and how to make it available

Edward Skillin, jr.

AN ANNUAL crop of several servings of string beans and a few dozen tomatoes—plus the maintenance of a small compost heap in the far corner of an over-shaded suburban backyard—is hardly adequate preparation for the proceedings of a full dress rural life conference. The train ride to Cincinnati fortunately provided a few hints along the way. Especially west of Columbus, where the land is flat and the soil dark and rich-looking, if hardly in a class with the fertile "black velvet" of which Iowans are so proud. It is the dying of the year; the trees bordering the fields were bare. In this area thick shocks of withered corn stalks are stacked in orderly fashion row on row. Here and there flecks of gold punctuate what on a grey day is a generally dismal landscape; ripened and dried ears of corn, bright splashes of orange and gold, vivid fruits of the harvest occasionally lie heaped in little piles between the rows.

It is quite beyond me whether these precious kernels have been set aside for seed purposes, for their normal function out that way of fattening hogs, or even to become grist for some unknown mills. But they certainly look well right now. So too do the tender shoots of winter rye or winter wheat, whose straight thin rows provide a hopefully green carpet blanketing certain of these fields where the shocks of lifeless corn stalks stand against the sky. Whatever the new sowing is, I gather that it is something for turning under to build up the soil for the crops of future years.

The slowly moving landscape is often dotted with rooting grey and black porkers, flocks of gleaming white chickens, and sizable flocks of grazing dun grey sheep. Many of the cattle along the railroad tracks in that part of Ohio look small and black. As we draw closer to Cincinnati the countryside becomes more rolling. Farms and fields give way to woodlands. For miles we follow what is at this time of year a narrow, placid, muddy stream which my uncommunicative Army Air Corps traveling companion (home for his first furlough in two years) identifies as the Miami. And after hours of looking out on field and forest, the young PFC next to him allows in a quiet Southern drawl that Ohio is a right good state. Was it the insufferable heat in the car or incurable lethargy that inspired the feeling that the tiny bungalows on stilts high on the steep banks of the silken-smooth Miami with its tubby rowboats were somehow more inviting than the more solid houses on the well-ordered cornfields we had passed earlier in the afternoon?

*

A sharp contrast to all this is Cincinnati's Netherland Plaza, where the conference took place. Even a weary New Yorker would recognize it as a real skyscraper in the heart of a bustling downtown district. The lobby, foyers and convention rooms are vast and lavish, with high ceilings, occasional mother-of-pearl mosaics and, now and then, hanging chandeliers which simply drip with glittering glass ornament. Nothing farther removed from the simplicity and proximity to the soil in rural life could be imagined. In fact, the only visible touch from the country came from the Ladies of the Grail of Loveland (sic), Ohio (population in 1900: 1,280). They had brought a few pumpkins, squash and other farm products for display at one entrance to the convention's exhibits.

It was, in fact, the cheery Ladies of the Grail, hostesses at their 183-acre farm near Loveland earlier in the day, who evoked the greatest enthusiasm of the delegates I found milling around the corridors upon my arrival. One priest put it very well: "I don't know what those Grail people have, but they've got something."

Shortly thereafter, smiling Dr. van Kersbergen, who is head of the Grail in America, appeared, surrounded by a bevy of her youthful attentive charges in flowered pinafores. Striking as was the obvious zest, devotion to their leader and unfailing cheeriness of these young students, it was the poise of each and all which was the most impressive. No trace of schoolgirl nervousness or unease was apparent no matter how numerous the introductions or how imposing-looking the high ecclesiastic. Many in the happy circle were of high school age and were merely temporary students at Grailville, but I have rarely encountered a group which seemed so readily to take everything in its stride.

Next time we saw the girls in action was in the hotel's lavish "Pavillion Caprice," a large oval

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room with walls in plain red, white, silver and pale blue lighted to bring out color contrasts and modernistic simplicity. Here they fascinated a large audience by performing Flemish, Swedish and American folk dances and then drawing city high school girls from the overflow audience showed them how to join in their increasingly intricate steps and figures.

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The flowered pinafores with their varied colors proved particularly useful in this connection, since each color would designate a pair of partners in the various formations. And what was remarkable here was not so much that it took the Cincinnati high school girls so little time to get the knack of the simpler routines but that they were so enamored of the whole idea. When volunteers from the audience were mentioned, they packed the large floor as if it were the two-by-four dance space of a New York night club. The high school boys and girls in rural garb who performed a fully rehearsed Virginia Reel to the tunes of a high school "cowboy band," also enjoyed it just as thoroughly. Seemingly no one could get enough. The discussion on Reading for Rural Life going on concurrently in the nearby "Hall of Mirrors" was woefully neglected. What was the secret?

Miss Barbara Ellenwald, one of the slightly more mature representatives of the Grail, threw out some hints about it. She told the waiting performers and the audience about the importance of people doing things together—working, singing, playing, praying together. She presented folk dancing as a symbolic act expressive of the joy of accomplishing a common achievement. In this atomistic, self-centered, sorely-divided world the Grail believes that we must rediscover how to accomplish things together. That may be one reason why the *Catholic Worker*, labor groups and cooperatives often make a point of going in for folk dancing. But that only partly explains everyone's enthusiasm for the square dancing that night or the real function in rural life of a form of group recreation which has long been threatening to become a lost art.

It is even less possible to analyze the true nature of the Grail without considerable first-hand study. In Europe, as I understand it, the attractive young women who joined the movement dedicated their lives principally to working in factories side by side with the daughters of the poor. Eventually they sought to win their fellow-workers and the families of the workers to the standard of Christ. Neatly garbed in ordinary clothes and undergoing the same labors, they reached many whom grinding poverty, hard working conditions and insecurity had made all but inaccessible to the clergy. The Grail sought to be a leaven in the inhuman workshops of western Europe and undertook an apostolate among the women of the depressed urban proletariat.

Over here the Grail is apparently engaged in building up the family from a rural angle. As her contribution to the many-sided discussion on postwar reconstruction, led by the President of the Conference, bluff and genial Bishop Schlarman of Peoria, Ill., in the Hall of Mirrors, Miss Janet Kalven told how her associates were trying to develop a new type of young woman—the "valiant woman" spoken of in the Bible, who recognizes the greatness of her true rôle of wife, mother and mistress of the household. It is a rôle which is intensely feminine and one which is most fully brought out by life on a family-centered small farm. Take, for instance, the poultry and livestock. Since a woman wants them as pets whom she can call and love by name, there must not be too many of them. A small farm is ample to provide the feed for the beloved cow, a few pigs and not too many ducks and chickens. In addition to her deep maternal instinct, woman enjoys variety; the family-centered farm—which is devoted primarily to supplying the food and feed required for home consumption—involves an infinite variety of satisfying little tasks for the mistress of the household. Finally it is important that the farms be small enough to be close together and constitute a genuine rural community where the woman can have the fellowship of her neighbors. If this whole pattern rests on a strong spiritual foundation the young woman of today can achieve her true fulfillment. Miss Kalven didn't say this, but I think it worth presenting the obvious contrast between such a creative mode of living with the unsatisfying alternative of a life in which soap operas, continual movies, frequent bridge parties, movie and slick women's magazines and the like play the leading rôle. Does the city woman really have the better of it, especially now that the country is no longer so primitive or remote?

These are the sorts of vista which the Grail opens to the girls of high school and college age—still undecided and still responsive to the attraction of great ideals and noble horizons. Grailville provides year-round courses in Catholic rural living and all sorts of shorter institutes. The girls are particularly elated right now that the first young couple is planning to set up a homestead in the immediate vicinity of their 183 acres at Loveland.

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This consideration of woman as a person whose profoundly emotional nature reaches the greatest fulfillment in the creative activities of a family-centered farm leads directly to a further consideration: what is the Catholic Rural Life Conference itself all about? Another vital question. For

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I venture to assert that there is not another American organization which after three days of continuous meetings would continue to manifest so marked a degree of enthusiasm and hope. Why is the belief of the rural lifers in their cause so ardent and abiding? It cannot all be ascribed to the dynamism, conviction and tireless zeal of Monsignor Luigi Ligutti.

Contrast the situation in other movements. Co-op leaders are enthusiastic, too, but cooperatives are only instruments in a much wider complexus of urban or rural life. They serve as a good means toward broader ends. So, also, with the labor movement. It, too, deals only with a part—again a highly important part—in a social entity which is far more comprehensive. It is another means toward the good life for individual and community. But sound rural life as envisioned by the Conference comes far closer to becoming a complete end in itself. The movement is far less concerned with attaining certain material or institutional objectives of an economic sort, but deals with the very stuff of human living itself.

What is the ideal the National Catholic Rural Life Conference holds forth? On the one hand there is the family-centered farm—ordinarily not more than 40 acres and often less. Here a man and his wife and children devote themselves primarily to becoming self-sustaining as to food and feed, with certain crops and handicrafts produced for the sake of meeting cash needs. Such a farm intelligently selected and managed provides a security for the family far beyond that possible in the uncertain industrial world. Children are an economic asset, since food is plentiful and they can begin to help around the place at an early age. Furthermore no environment is better than the farm for developing initiative, responsibility, manual dexterity, creativeness, appreciation of the beauties of nature, and, if it is a component part of a good rural community, good social attitudes.

In the second place the Conference is strong for part-time farming. As First-Vice-President Rev. Patrick Quinlan of Brookfield Center, Connecticut, explained it at one of the sectional meetings, a man should have at least an acre of arable land to qualify as a part-time farmer. This will enable him to reduce his living costs by producing all the vegetables he would otherwise have to buy at the store. It may even enable him to produce a small cash crop. All this is particularly useful if he works in a seasonal industry and it serves as a real cushion whenever he is laid off. He has room and light and air to raise a family, while the cultivation of a plot of ground of this size enables him and his family to develop the rural virtues outlined above. If he does it well, he may eventually want to devote all his time to farming, and almost certainly his children will develop that love of the land which may lead to their going in for the real thing—when they reach adulthood—full-fledged rural life on the small farm.

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To what extent is this good life possible for any appreciable number of Americans? There are many obstacles. Foremost is the unavailability of good farm land. The Army is said to have some 8,000,000 acres around its various temporary posts, but there is no other single source available of any size. Unless some definite provisions are made which give such groups as returning veterans direct access to it, this land will be snapped up by larger farmers or by agricultural corporations riding on the trend toward larger and larger agricultural units. The very fact that the creation of family-size farm units—which is much more practicable now because of rural electrification and other technical advances—goes directly against those prevailing tendencies which are creating a new dispossessed rural proletariat, is itself a great obstacle.

Besides, few city folk realize how much knowledge, experience, manual skill, versatility and intelligence are required for successful farming. For those who are inspired to settle on the land for the first time, for instance, Father Quinlan recommends beginning with part-time agriculture. After the war the competition against larger farm enterprises will be too stiff for beginners. By keeping one foot in industry while he gingerly places one foot on the land, a man can find out whether he can gradually acquire enough rural lore as he goes along to make a success of full-time farming. And that points to a need stressed in the speech of Bishop Muench of Fargo, N. D., who with Bishop Ryan of Bismarck, S. D., has long been one of the Conference's leading lights. Bishop Muench called for a new orientation of education in rural areas and towns adjacent to rural areas. (For the latter he strongly recommended "Getting Acquainted with Agriculture," published by the Interstate Press of Danville, Ill.) Instead of the urban slant in so many of the textbooks still used in rural areas, he called for texts which would inculcate love for farm life, respect for the talent and rôle of the farmer, emphasis on farm mechanics and homemaking and vocational agricultural guidance. Indeed keeping young people on the farm is one of the chief objectives of the Rural Life Conference. Then he would establish folk schools on the Danish model which give adults a broad general education and instruct them in home crafts.

Bishop Ryan, for his part, did not see how sound rural life could be built up unless government took a hand. He is rightfully fearful of the danger of the abuse of power which arises from leaving so much to the State, but there are

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certain matters which only the State has the facilities to handle. He greatly stressed the need for government redistribution of industry and population in the common interest, for the war has further aggravated our economically unhealthy distribution. In such matters as soil conservation, taxation to prevent speculation in land, maintaining commodity prices, agricultural rehabilitation à la FSA, maintenance of a family wage for farm labor, abolishing discriminatory freight rates, irrigation, public health and enabling the returning soldier to acquire good land at non-inflated prices, only government authorities of some kind are capable of taking the needed action. But this in turn demands an ever-alert citizenry to thwart any accompanying abuse of power. It might be mentioned in this connection that irrigation is one means of opening up new lands for division into smaller farms of the type envisioned.

Another is suggested by the situation in the diocese of Wichita, Kansas, where there is some thought of buying some of the homes for defense workers which were built on good farm land where soft water can be had only 14 feet below the surface of the ground. The trick—to use a Kappo Phelan term—will be to secure the property before the housing authorities tear down the temporary dwellings, a number of which are said to be sound and solid.

In Cincinnati itself, Rev. Joseph V. Urbain, archdiocesan rural life director, secured a plot of 180 acres only 4 miles from the city of Hamilton. He is building up a new parish, which now consists of 40 families, three-quarters of them part-time and the rest full-time farmers. He urges each family to produce enough to provide for its own needs, plus one cash crop—thus far strawberries, which have netted as much as $300 for one of the families. Father Urbain made this possible for low-income city families by making plots available where necessary for as little as $5.00 per month. The settlers learn about the soil from a rural discussion group. There is a community barn and common pasture, while every family owns a cow or shares ownership with one or two others. The building of the parish house at "Queen's Acres" gives an indication of the spirit in the thing. Except for the plastering, which required a skill in which none of the homesteaders were proficient, it was completed entirely by the parishioners themselves. When they were pouring concrete for the basement, the wooden forms twice gave way, yet they kept right at it until two in the morning when the job was complete.

No doubt there are similar projects in certain other dioceses, but there is little indication that they are very numerous or have been attempted on any large scale. And wartime building restrictions are still a tough obstacle, too. Taken all in all Granger, Iowa, and its various rural counterparts provide unmistakable evidence that at least in certain areas of our land diversified family-type farming is practicable, as is part-time farming, too. No doubt the biggest job of the Rural Life Conference is educational, a task in which the personal contacts which its meetings afford play no small part. The fact that more than 1,500 members, delegates and guests registered at the Netherland Plaza from all parts of the country is an index of their current momentum and success.

The evangelical leaders of this promising movement have set themselves a hard row to hoe. What they want, although practicable and highly desirable from a long-range Christian and democratic point of view, runs counter to the dominant trends of our day. The rural lifers have set themselves a tremendous task and the return to peacetime activities gives them an unparalleled opportunity. They have no illusions that there is any chance of gaining universal acceptance for their panacea. If they influence any sizable proportion of our rural people they will be doing well. I have a feeling that if anyone could make a perceptible dent on the public mind in this matter, these present enthusiasts can do it.

The Last Things

The aim has been accurate, or the truck has skidded,
or the condition failed to respond to treatment.

The personal effects have been catalogued by the Summary
Court;
they will be sent home by way of Kansas City.
The Line of Duty Board has reported on the proper form
(copies of which may be secured from the Assistant S-1).
The CO has written a letter of condolence,
giving the time, place, cause of death;
nothing more will be learned (or maybe the friends will
write).
The Service Record is completed by the clerk,
and he moves the card in the locater file.
And a particular judgment has been made.

The Flesh and the Blood have been offered,
the trumpet (G with slide to F, plastic) is sounded
over the plain but adequate coffin.
"A grave's a fine and private place"
to lie and wait for a while.
The place is registered by the graves man
and marked on the Chaplain's small, pathetic map.

Nothing more, it is thought, will happen
until a more general finding
after the return of the clay to itself,
except the resurrection of the body,
except the carving on the soldiers' monument
at Sixth and Hickory streets,
except the life everlasting.

MARSHALL SMELSER.

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For a People's Peace

The conference delegates must bring their credentials

F. G. Friedmann

WHILE MANY details of the proposed peace organization are not yet available for public discussion, it is no secret that the chief concern of our diplomats is to find ways and means of "enforcing the peace," or more specifically, of enforcing a European "order" which will make it impossible for that continent, and for the world as a whole, to be plunged into war again.

Such an attitude, however, runs directly counter to the teaching of history which tells us that the chances of peace depend far more on the order to be enforced than on the technique of enforcement. No human order—whether the constitution of a country or an international organization—can ever be stronger than the faith of its participants. This is why it is not difficult to "enforce" the American Constitution, expression as it is of the needs, the will, the aspirations of a people. And this is, also, why an institution like the Constitution of Weimar could be so easily torn apart by men who did not believe in it.

The Great Powers, neglecting to inquire into the nature of peace and accepting, unconsciously, or at least uncritically, the traditional view of peace based on an organization of sovereign nations, do not seem to be aware of the fact that even an organization of sovereign nations cannot be stronger than the will of its participants. For, otherwise, they would ask themselves, before even trying to build such an organization, whether a nation can be said to have a will at all.

The answer, in that case, probably would be that culturally a nation might well be interpreted as a person, consequently, as endowed with a will. Politically, however, in order to find something corresponding to a real will, we would have to go all the way back to the time when nations were still governed by princes; by a sovereign who virtually owned the nation and, thus, was able, as a real person and having a real will, to enter into compacts with other princes and to give his word that he would honor them.

Our believers in peace based on an organization of sovereign nations do not realize the historical fact that, once the prince had been dismissed and a different form of government established, the will of the nation in her relationship with other nations became only a fictitious one, a mere abstraction with the borrowed characteristics of the once living prince. They act under the illusion that the envoy of an elected government represents necessarily the will of his people; actually, only with respect to the internal affairs of a country have the elected representatives a clear mandate from the people and do represent its will and interests; as soon as the envoys of governments who have been elected according to the traditional democratic procedure enter into relationships with envoys of other governments, they cease to represent the popular will—which cannot be interested in territories and possessions and spheres of influence—and come to represent, even if they themselves are unaware of it, the interests of the "nation," that is, once again the interests of the dead and all but forgotten prince.

This view is constantly being corroborated by the difficulties which our diplomats encounter in their attempts at enforcing the peace: the very cleavage that exists between whatever plan of peace organization is being discussed and the problem of its enforcement follows from the interpretation of peace as based on an organization of nations. As the nations which are supposed to enter the new European "order" have no real will, diplomats and experts are trying now to do the impossible: namely to manipulate those nations, or rather, those fictitious wills, so as to make them behave as real wills, that is, to make them act. Some, of course, try to succeed by making out of the peace-organization an automaton, a mechanism that has no need of any will to go into action. Others, however, try it by substituting the "real" interests of the ruling classes (monarchy, nobility, big business) for the fictitious will of the nations. And again others try it by advocating the curtailment or even the abolition of the sovereignty of nations as if a fictitious will—a will that does not really exist—could be curtailed or abolished.

What all of them forget is that a nation can do just what the dead prince was able to do: make wars and acquire territories; that it can never do what they want it to do: to participate in the establishment and maintenance of peace. For peace, today, is gained or lost in spheres of life where nations have no say: it depends upon the social and economic and moral conditions

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under which the people—the people of all the earth—have to live. If wars so far have been caused by the fictitious will of nations, only the will—the real will—of the peoples is able, now, to give us peace.

The first problem to be solved is, therefore, how to achieve genuine representation of the will of the people. To this end we have to ask ourselves what is "the people." Is it the average man of the statistician—five feet ten and with a life-expectancy of sixty-five years? Or the masses—the great number of families in the low-income bracket—as distinguished from the prospering minority? Or simply numbers on an electoral register?

The history of the recent past, of the popular Resistance against Nazidom, should have taught us how distressingly unrealistic these materialistic and naturalistic conceptions are; that "the people" are not a social or economic status but an attitude toward life, a spiritual reality; that belonging to the people does not depend on birth or background, that it is not the result of economic necessity but of an act of free choice: a choice in front of common problems, of common suffering; that belonging to the people means being conscious of the common nature of that suffering and accepting the responsibilities that spring from it.

The people are evidently not the ones who compromised with fascism and thus escaped the tyrant's sword but those who kept the flame of freedom burning during all the years of apparent hopelessness of their cause; who ran out into the streets to welcome deliriously their liberators while bullets were still whining around their heads. Representing the people means to represent this attitude, this view of life, and it can be done only by those who are a part of it.

It becomes then evident that the representatives of the peoples to the European peace-conference—which, if it is truly creative of "order," must soon become a European Constituent—must, first, be directly elected by the people and not be appointed by the respective governments; must, secondly, give positive proof of their belonging to the people. To be eligible a candidate must either have been an active member of the Resistance or have fought in the Underground or been a prisoner of the Gestapo, or he must furnish equivalent proof that, by his very outlook on life, he is able to represent the will of the people. In order to avoid the dangers which might arise from the candidacy of proven but ambitious leaders one might even resort to the drawing by lot of the representatives from a pool of eligibles.

Such a procedure, it will be objected, may well provide true representatives of the people; on the other hand, will not the very rigid requirements as well as the drawing by lot eliminate the best minds of a country? To this it is easy to reply by stating that both logic and historical experience teach us that peace is not so much an intellectual problem, a problem of great minds, as it is a moral problem, a problem of attitudes. And there can be no doubt that the will for peace on the side of the European peoples is genuine and uncompromising. As to the many technical questions which are inevitably connected with the organization of peace, they may be left in the hands of experts. There will have to be a clear understanding, however, that the peace will not be of the experts but of the people. The task of the experts will be, as it should be, the task of every branch of science, to find the means of realization of the moral purposes on which alone peace can be built and which the people, and no one but the people, are able to determine.

It is not difficult to see how the method of electing the people's representatives as we have proposed it will also greatly facilitate the solution of the German problem. We are all agreed that German militarism has to be utterly destroyed. But comparing militarism to an infectious disease we cannot regard it as good medical practice to do nothing but cut off the boils whenever they form, that is, to fight the symptoms of the disease as we did at Versailles—the German efforts to rearm and to conquer—instead of investigating the very nature of the disease, that inferiority complex which finds its expression in militarism and racism and in all the other evils which we are fighting to-day.

If we know that there are diseases where amputations are necessary, and we are agreed that Germany has to be relieved of her military machine, we also know that no amputation can be successful if the remainder of the body is not allowed to heal and to form a new organic whole. A people's peace, and a people's peace alone, could both prevent the recurrence of German as well as any other fascism, and create the conditions under which a German convalescence would be possible. Let the German people, as any other people in Europe, have their representatives in the Constituent. Considering, as we do, the "people" as an attitude instead of a social or economic or racial condition, there is no reason to assume that there is no German people; that there are not German nationals able to satisfy the conditions for the candidacy of a people's representative, who have fought in the Resistance or been prisoners of the Gestapo.

Only this idea of a people's peace makes it possible for us to interpret, and to deal with, fascism in a modern and realistic way. For, if the German people become a member of the European family of peoples, German fascism, after having been defeated in the field, ceases to be a military problem, a problem from without, and becomes a problem of police, a problem from within. The

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profession of fascism and any deed resulting from it would then be regarded as a criminal offense against the laws established and enforced by the European Federation of Peoples. It would be the responsibility of a European police force to apprehend the perpetrators of such crimes and to have them tried in the people's courts. Only in case of serious difficulties on the part of fascist cliques or secret organizations would an appeal for help be sent to non-European powers whose forces would merely act as re-inforcements, and within the frame-work, of the regular European police force. Such an arrangement is the only feasible answer to the otherwise insoluble problem of a security organization.

To realize such a scheme, it will be the duty of all the European Resistance groups and the political parties connected with them to include immediately in their programs the principle of a European Federation and to work towards its organization wherever and whenever they come to power. While doing this they will do well to be on guard against those leaders and groups who try to revive the old nationalism (the dead prince) under the guise of the new nationalism (the people's autonomy) as it has developed so spectacularly in the struggle against the foreign invader.

As to the Great Powers who have valiantly fought for the liberation of Europe, it will be their task to understand that what is good for Europe is good for the world. Peace in Europe can never be imposed from without; it cannot be "enforced" if based on fictitious wills. In fact, any such attempt by the extra-European powers would unite the peoples of Europe in a spirit of rebellion not dissimilar to the spirit that manifested itself in the 30's and 40's of the last century against the Powers of the Restoration.

Any continued interference in European affairs by the big extra-European powers, maintaining there the antiquated concept of national sovereignty, would cause also and inevitably those same powers to shed their original character as federal unions or commonwealths and to become super-nations interested, like the dead prince, in territories and spheres of influence. On the other hand, the recognition of the principle of a people's peace would eliminate Europe as the traditional battlefield of rival interests and thus remove the main hazard to the peaceful collaboration of the Great Powers.

Peace, at this time, is dependent on the all-round application of the principle of democracy. While most of us accept the principle of political democracy, while the adherents of the principle of economic democracy are putting up an increasingly successful fight against the economic theories of the past century, it is high time to establish the principle of democracy also in the relations between peoples as against the still current eighteenth-century conception of international relations. If peace is indivisible, so is democracy on which peace depends; this means that political democracy, or even political and economic democracy, are not enough without that third aspect of democracy, the principle of federalism.

It is not impossible, if Europe succeeds in achieving a people's peace and in constituting herself a Federal Union, that the peoples of the Big Three will compel their governments to transform gradually their power alliance into an association of Federal unions and commonwealths, composed of the United States of America, of the Soviet Union and of the British Commonwealth (not just of Great Britain, the nation) to be joined by the European federation of peoples and eventually by a union of the peoples of India and South-East Asia, a Chinese federal republic, an Arab federation, a Latin-American union. Such a federation will be the only type of world-wide peace-organization able to enforce itself in our democratic age because it alone corresponds to, and satisfies, the will of the people.

Communications

MEDITATION ROUND MR. PAULDING

Crickhowell, Breconshire, Wales.

TO the Editors: I have never met Mr. Paulding. I know nothing about him, except that he often writes in THE COMMONWEAL and I like what he writes. I know from what he writes that he is greatly concerned with Europe; and still more concerned with mankind. And obviously there is some English descent in him (the Yorkshire poll-tax returns record a John de Paldeyn in 1379); but for all I know his other grandparents were Polish and Dutch and Norse. I have sometimes tried to picture him in those offices on Fourth Avenue where I first met Philip Burnham and Edward Skillin; but his face obstinately remains printers' ink and paper, recording human and humane thoughts.

Ships go out of East-coast American ports, and steam perhaps up to Iceland, or down to Saint Helena. Anyway, they cross the Atlantic, taking heaven-knows-what fantastic twentieth-century time on the job. And so every two or three weeks I find on my desk two or three COMMONWEALS—or more often one COMMONWEAL two or three days running. I remove the wrappers carefully (paper is precious), and stuff their contents into my pocket. For the next week or so I read Mr. Paulding as I travel about my business, mostly when waiting in bus queues (why don't we spell is "kews"?) and suchlike monotonous times.

I don't read only Mr. Paulding, of course; generally I read every word of each issue. But the name of Paulding will always be associated in my mind with the years 1943 and 1944, with traveling daily by bus and train about this southeast corner of Wales. He is as much a part of the mental picture as the red buses and the dingy

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trains. He gets in and out with the soldiers, British and American and Indian and Belgian, with the market women and the farmers, the restless school-children and the garrulous "evacuees" from London and Liverpool. A figure of speech of rabelaisian size would say that Mr. Paulding lurks behind the handsome farms of Gwent and the mountains of Brecknock: a vast aura to Cerrig Calch and Gadair Fawr and Pen Gloch y Pibwr (which means Piper's Bell Top). I connect him with the poet Henry Vaughan: for I so often pass the shaded churchyard where for nearly three hundred years his body has lain, and I ask myself if Paulding has read Vaughan. The inscription on the tombstone is in Latin. On the hill road just behind, fourteen hundred years earlier, other soldiers passed to and fro, soldiers who spoke that tongue.

Along the highway below this churchyard once rode that Prince Charles from whom the Carolinas are named, whose brother gave its name to New York and their mother hers to Maryland. No doubt he had called at the house lower down where lived a certain Proger, who—so Marvell the poet implies—was pander for Charles's disreputable pleasures. Much later that house was owned by the Phillips who founded Phillipston in Pennsylvania; and later still a visitor there was that queer fish Frederic Rolfe, otherwise "Baron Corvo." Mixed memories for Mr. Paulding to muse on—to say nothing of the reminders everywhere of those Norman lords whose social influence on this border land is not yet effaced.

A few miles away is a prisoner-of-war camp—Italians. They wave to the passing bus, the back of the hand downward—as I learned to wave from the train east of Modane in the fall of 1917. Mr. Paulding writes of Rome and Italy. And on August 25 he wrote of prisons. I think of those dark men in brown—but they have lots of liberty. There is also the guard-room cell at the camp at XYZ, where British tommies stand at the windows, holding on by the bars, watching the passers-by. They are there for only a few hours, and nothing very alarming will happen to them. But still . . . Prisons.

The truck-drivers turn west at One Hundred and Tenth Street for New England, I learn from Mr. Paulding. Where should we go if this bus took the next western turn? Up the mountain (if we could make it). And from the flat top we should see into the heart of Radnor county, whence was peopled The Welsh Tract in what is now the State of Delaware; and the other way is the distant smoke of a great industrial plant in whose planning American technicians had a big hand (censors forbid a greater precision). We could go on till within sight of the Bristol Channel; and then swing east to cross the Wye River into old England. Or west to Swansea—parent to the Swansea in Massachusetts where Welshmen planted the mother church of American Baptists.

But it keeps on its winding way to its destination. And I lunch in that house where once lived Gwenllian Morgan, the friend and fellow worker of the American Louise Imogen Guiney, who did so much work on the "Carolines," including Vaughan.

> Here's brotherly ruffs and beards, and a strange sight
> Of high monumental hats, ta'en at the fight
> Of 'eighty-eight; while every burgess foots
> The mortal pavement in eternal boots.

That is Vaughan on the dour Cromwellians in Brecon town. It might almost be someone who knew pre-*anschluss* Austria writing about nazi Vienna. In some other words of his, inviting a friend, I would address Mr. Paulding:

> . . . Let us,
> 'Mid noise of war, of peace and mirth discuss.
> This portion thou wert born for. Why should we
> Vex at the time's ridiculous misery?
> An age that thus hath fooled itself, and will
> (Spite of thy teeth and mine) persist so still.
> Let's sit then at this fire. . . .

That is not possible. And even if it were, it might not be right. But perhaps when these tyrannies be overpast I may meet Mr. Paulding in the flesh, whether in Breconshire or the Bronx.

DONALD ATTWATER.

THE PROBLEM OF OUR SOCIETY

Lynn, Mass.

TO the Editors: In your article "The Problem of Our American Society" you state "Certain trade unions, by strictly limiting their membership, have achieved artificially high wage rates. This has been especially true in the building trades, and the result has been to place a serious brake on building activity for which there would otherwise be a ready demand."

You are right in stating that certain trade unions have artificially high rates as a result of limiting their membership. This practice, which does exist, is undesirable. However, this is a comparatively minor factor in placing a brake on building activity. Another factor, the cost of capital, is a major item in figuring the cost of a dwelling. According to Nathan Straus, former director of the USHA, if wages were cut in half the cost of a building would be reduced about ten percent. But if the interest rate were cut, with wages remaining at their present level, the cost of the building would be reduced over twenty-five percent.

The ready demand for housing would seem to be more easily realized if an effort were made to reduce the interest rates which are the real brake on building activity.

JAMES J. MCFADDEN.

Mr. McFadden makes a valid point. He does not distinguish, however, between the ultimate total *cost of a building and the* immediate *cost, or capital investment. If one assumes that a home is to be financed by the purchaser over a twenty year period for* 80 *percent of its value at* 5 *percent interest, then Mr. Straus's statement would be approximately correct, assuming a* 50 *percent cut in the interest rate. But this is the extreme situation. The labor costs on private dwellings can vary considerably according to the amount of prefabricated material used. But it would be a reasonably fair statement to say that labor accounts for between one-third and two-thirds of the* original cost *of a home. It is this original cost which looms largest in a purchaser's mind and with which the speculative builder is* exclusively *concerned. The ultimate cost is of course important, but it plays relatively little part in*

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the determination of a customer to buy or of a builder to build.—THE EDITORS.

EZRA POUND

Tinker Field, Okla.

TO the Editors: In answer to Mr. J. J. Cohane's objection (November 10) to my recent article on Ezra Pound (it is, I suppose, only proper to answer when one's work has been referred to as "cheap journalism"), I find that there is really very little to say. There seems no particular point in returning invective, and yet there is little in Mr. Cohane's letter that is not mere invective. I look for possible points of controversy, for a correction, for a specific objection, and I find: that my article on Pound is "cheap journalism"; that my article on the Nashville Fugitives was "slick and superficial"; that I probably have never read Pound (the implication apparently being that if I had I would never say such things); that even had I read him I do not possess either the "taste" or "judgment" to appreciate him. I am "ignorant," I am not "sensible," and—most unpardonable of all—I am "young."

This type of objection (consisting of a general subjective statement unsupported by evidence) is not, I am afraid, of a very high order. It is mere name-calling, and accomplishes nothing. It is unanswerable because it is meaningless, and may cause the reader to wonder whether, after all, Mr. Cohane *has* any valid objections—and, if so, why he has not stated them. Where, for instance, is the evidence for Mr. Cohane's assertion that I have never read Pound? Are we to be content with his mere word for it that I have not? Again, he states that I lack the taste and judgment to appreciate Pound's poetry. Does this mean anything more than that, since I do not value certain poetry which Mr. Cohane does, I lack taste and judgment? If that is all it means (and there is nothing to indicate the contrary), then I must decline to be deeply depressed.

Only once is Mr. Cohane specific. He states that I regard the "very solid service" which Pound rendered by publishing the efforts of promising young writers as "part of an act." Now I am prepared to agree that this *was* a very solid service; at the same time, I require further proof that I did not correctly expose his motives in rendering this service, which I suspect was a by-product. There is no contradiction there, as Mr. Cohane a bit naïvely assumes: it is everywhere demonstrable that a general good may result fortuitously from motives which are scarcely admirable in themselves. OLIVER W. EVANS.

The Stage & Screen

In Bed We Cry

THERE IS, I am sure, A Moral to be pointed in the fact that Noel Coward should have got himself securely brangled in the borough of Brooklyn during the same week that this expensive sham-child of his crashes to boredom on Broadway. It seems obvious that the old *toujours de l'audace* banner is a fairly shabby one to fly in the face of anybody's soldiers, and here Ilka Chase's chosen reading of its legend is as questionable as it is dull. Dramatizing her own "best-selling novel" (surely this program-listing is a little coercive, or is it merely a sort of be-it-upon-your-own-head attack?) Miss Chase gives us a celebrated cosmetician whose scientist husband decides to desert her laboratories for the Real Thing—a decision which (by some incredible dint) rapidly thrusts her into the arms of a wicked cad, from whence she can only finally escape upon receipt of the news of the death of her erstwhile spouse in farthest Africa from wounds suffered in battle.

I am sorry to present such a galloping synopsis but can only assure you the story is nothing to dwell on. Mounted in three dragée-almond settings conjured by Joseph B. Platt, its subsidiary people descend from a "best-selling" Actress to a "best-selling" Decorator; reaching, I should say, the nadir in a "best-selling" Butler in livery called Fairweather. What philosophy Miss Chase has managed to manage will be that delivered in a ringing monotone to the "best-selling" Heel of the piece whose sudden and scandalous appearance in a gossip column seems to prove to her that he is against "group living." And what last-minute emotions she manages to tap from the house are not, I think, honestly compelled. Leaning on the irresistible anguish of war casualties at this time, she brings her curtain down on a scene of tragic proportions—one certainly sorrowfully familiar to numbers of her audience but as certainly not motivated by her characters, nor in any way supported by her play.

The performances are in line. I may say I have never seen a cast more expert at not getting laughs. In spite of having to deal with solid silence across the foots, the actors allow no large holes to punctuate the tempo of the piece, merely a series of infinitestimal hesitations where the expected boff does not occur. Very neat. The author herself, in a succession of vertical gowns and horizontal hats by Adrian, delivers an exhaustive job in the primary rôle.

But as she has never been a *player*—has always, consequently, depended upon a flat and mannered *speaking of lines*, I am afraid her own script cages her completely. I would like to say a word for Paul McGrath as one of the best of auxiliary actors. His work in building background, mood, even physical position for the more blatantly nonsensical of his partners seemed to me truly adroit, and constituted the only interest in a despairing evening. (*At the Belasco.*)

Sadie Thompson

FOR EVERY REASON, the switch in title—from "Rain" to the name of its protagonist—would seem to me to indicate the fractures in this enormous version of Somerset Maugham's classic of prostitution and errant Christianity on the island of Pago Pago. Scrupulously stressed as a Musical Play rather than an Opera by its authors—Howard Dietz and Rouben Mamoulian on the writing end, Vernon Duke for music, Mamoulian again

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as *régisseur*—one gathers that these movers wished to fangle a drama with spoken dialogue plus music, the latter ingredient to be divided into song numbers, dance numbers, some preparatory orchestral work. Now it seems to me that this scheme might have some chance of success if it had ever been decided what part the music and its components was to play in the entire fandango: whether it was to be merely incidental, setting and sustaining the grim mood of the piece (when surely the first title would have been retained and instruments and voices would have reared and beaten that tropic weather which originally unified the story); or whether the songs, dances, expository ballet were truly to activate the plot, forward it to its conclusion.

However that may be, it is apparent by the present production, that no such clear-cut decision was ever even adumbrated, and what now goes on at the Alvin is a sort of million sprawl with none of its parts ever plainly divided, and more, with what loose divisions as are present being poorly planned. In other words, it was my feeling throughout that what was musicked might better have been spoken, what was danced, sung. Beyond a quite wonderful visual effect of falling water occasionally outlining Boris Aronson's good set, there is no rain. The songs are lyricky tunes interrupting everything and not inherent to the primary theme; there is a great slice of Hollywood fakery called a Montage (danced) which is supposedly an interpretation of Sadie's Conversion and endures endlessly; a variety of styles ranging from a renaissance system of set changes to a parody of Oriental dance form is on view. These, together with the fact that the thing suffers, of course, from the current industrial disease which I have decided to call *gigantica*. The symptoms of this are cumulative naturally and spring from the illusion that one-hundred-and-forty-four girls are better than twenty; that ballet, solo, and chorus dancing are all necessary regardless of their motivation; and that the Most-Most-Most is always more exciting than the chosen. Split, as it is, into unrelated pieces, there are some good things to be found in the show: one or two songs, one or two scenes with emotional impact, a costume here and there, some steps. But for these you have to dig, just as you have to dig for the story and any reaction beyond confusion. Yes, the theater has become hard work on both sides of the proscenium.

In the department of acting, I think June Havoc does an impressive job. Pictorially more than satisfactory—an orange umbrella and a pair of incredible boots substituting for Jeanne Eagels's renowned red bag—she displays emotional power as well as the ability to sing and dance. And I am delighted to reverse my former opinion that she seemed to lean on experience rather than any particular talent. Here she does, I think, project small, but perhaps just because of this, comes out true in the midst of the moil. I thought Lansing Hatfield's Davidson considerably weakened by the lyricism of his music as opposed to his character. For the rest, Ralph Dumke, Zolya Talma, and especially Doris Patston all indomitably manage to come through. (*At the Alvin.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

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But for the Grace of God

AFTER SEEING *"None But the Lonely Heart"* I came away baffled: confused because I realized I had seen one of the best cinema productions made in many a year (and one that told perhaps the grimmest story ever turned out by Hollywood) and yet I was not certain what the film was trying to say. So after seeing the picture I turned to Richard Llewellyn's novel, on which Clifford Odets based his script, to look for the key. I don't advise your doing this for I found the original more sordid and even less satisfactory with its answer. As a matter of fact, the movie is an improvement over the novel.

Odets has made many changes in rewriting the story for the screen, principally in simplifying the theme, in making Ernie an older man (so Cary Grant could play the rôle) and in attempting to suggest that there could be and was coming at least a hope of improvement in the lot of these downtrodden people of the slums. While I would object to the novel's completely hopeless situation, I cannot agree with Odets's version which hints that the war ("There is something shuddering in the air these days") will bring an answer to the brotherhood of man or that man can depend only on himself to find a way out of the maze of despair and poverty in this vale of tears.

However, for the film's realistic visualization of appalling conditions in London's East End during the 1930's, I heartily recommend "None But the Lonely Heart" to serious, adult movie goers. It tells the story of Ernie Mott, a lone wolf disgusted with a world he never made. Ernie tries to run away but has the decency to stay when he learns that his mother is seriously ill with cancer. Blow after blow descends upon Ernie. He sees only two choices: be a victim or a thug, travel with the hares or the hounds. In rebelling against the misery around him, he joins a low gang of thieves. Deeper and deeper Ernie sinks into the mire. If "None But the Lonely Heart" does nothing more than makes us realize that we are also responsible for Ernie's downfall and we must help him rise, the film would be worth many times its weight in gold.

As a contribution to cinema this picture is outstanding. Clifford Odets's script is excellent in spite of some high sounding speeches that do not ring true in his characters, especially those in which Ernie expresses his dreams of the better man. Odets is also responsible for the film's first-rate direction. For days after seeing the picture, one is haunted by certain scenes: Ernie and his gang robbing Ike's pawnshop, Ernie and Ada confronting the evil leader of the gang amidst the tinkling clamor at the Fun Fair, Ernie visiting his dying mother in prison. Also responsible for the moving quality of this film is the magnificent cast that Odets has directed so well. While Cary Grant is not the pimply nineteen-year-old of the novel, his performance as the movie's Ernie is haunting for its portrayal of despair, rebellion and confusion. (One wonders of course why this older Ernie waited so long to question his life and surroundings.) Ethel Barrymore brings to the rôle of Ma Mott a dignity and sincerity that make her characterization unforgettable. Ma sees through her son, tries to help him and is beaten by her illness and her own incapacity. Seldom does a movie have such fine supporting players: George Coulouris as the evil gangster who admits he's an inhuman machine, June Duprez as the blonde who attracts Ernie and throws him over to go the easiest way, Jane Wyatt as the understanding woman who accepts Ernie without trying to remake him, Barry Fitzgerald as the stranger who comes and goes in a kind of Greek-chorus characterization, Konstantin Shayne as the philosophical pawnbroker who helps Ernie out of admiration for Ernie's Ma, "a great woman."

Praise should also go to David Hempstead for the good production throughout the film. The lighting and photography fit the theme beautifully; and so does Hanns Eisler's music; however the latter tends to distract at times by forcing itself above the visuals. Perhaps the technical perfection of this whole movie is a point against it. Occasionally one is so impressed with the beauty of the scenes and the expert acting that one loses sight of the ideas being expressed; and therein lies a danger, for not once should we be allowed to forget that Ernie's problem and his groping for a better world is our problem too. I am most curious to learn how this film will be received by audiences. Seldom are they given cinema fare of such weight and a story that has so little sentimental romance and comedy relief. Perhaps "None But the Lonely Heart" can be used as a test case to judge the adultness of movie goers. I sincerely hope for its box-office success, for upon it depends, no doubt, the future making of such films. Perhaps if this picture does win audiences, the long planned production of Graham Greene's "Brighton Rock" will be made. And then we shall see a similar film and one that has a stronger moral purpose.

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Books of the Week

Everybody's Political What's What? Bernard Shaw. Dodd. $3.00.

MR. SHAW, who had written many prefaces, now offers what he no doubt considers an epilogue. At any rate, a good many people who have dreamed of summing up Shaw may as well give up. This book does it for them. Nothing is missing—neither the puns which are there to shock the maiden aunts of Blimp, Jr., nor the anti-vaccination crusade nor the perennial essay on progressive education. Shaw still does not understand either a child or a priest. He can offer you a malicious treatise on something he knows nothing about, and then give you a neat dissertation on a subject he knows more about than anybody else. And yet, when everything is said and done, this is a book, a trim, spare, disciplined prizefighter of a book and make no mistake about it.

The thesis is one my grandmother would have enjoyed. For she belonged to a frontier generation which has been sentimentalized out of all semblance to its true self. My grandmother thought that people ought to be made to behave, and that if they didn't there ought to be a law on the subject. The frontier strung up those who were seriously off the straight and narrow path. It ran minor offenders out of its model communities. Mr. Shaw, being one of her ilk who has survived into the complex contemporary world, simply refuses to believe that its complexities justify not having dictatorial laws. In his opinion it all boils down to having a state which can keep the citizenry in order. And inevitably the state demands the statesman.

That, of course, is Platonic, and Mr. Shaw is an Anglo-Irish Plato whose Socrates is Beatrice Webb. Nothing has ever dissuaded him from believing that the Fabian exposition of Marx was a dialectic in which the Good revealed itself. He says, for example, that if Lenin had taken advantage of what Beatrice could have taught him, Russian Sovietism could have avoided the mistakes which unfortunately prevented it from becoming sooner what Beatrice ultimately concluded that it was. Anyhow most of the present book is a sort of treatise on how the statesman ought to be brought up. It does not have the grandeur or the solidity of the old Greek "Republic." As a matter of fact a good deal of it is balderdash, which will make people angry when it doesn't grieve them. But I repeat—it is a treatise, and may the good Lord grant that it will finally make some of the rest of us mad enough to offer an intelligent and intelligible substitute.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

The Iliad of Homer. William Benjamin Smith and Walter Miller. A line for line translation in dactylic hexameter, illustrated with the classical designs of John Flaxman. Macmillan. $3.75.

ONE PICKS up this book prepared for some kind of a valiant failure to do the impossible—for surely to translate Homer line for line into English in the original meter is, one would say, utterly impossible. But this translation, when read aloud, achieves several rather remarkable things. It makes one aware that this poetry was meant to be chanted, not read. The lines have a long-reaching, mouthfilling rhythm that has an ancient and bard-like quality which reminds one more of "Beowulf" than of eighteenth or nineteenth century

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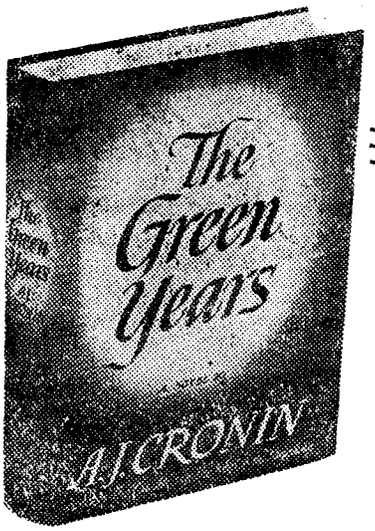

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English poetry, as do the familiar verse translations of Homer. It recaptures the feeling of a work of art from a splendid and imaginative but barbaric age and has something of the primitive wildness that lingers in the "Iliad." At the same time it retains the Homeric effect of a completely mature artistic intelligence (not at all primitive in the sense of being crude in perception or undeveloped in sensibility) lighting the figures of Greek and Trojan heroes and their splendid arms and the dramatic clash of their characters as if one saw them in the level, clear light of the rising sun. Professor Rand of Harvard is quoted as saying that the translation contains "nothing pompous or archaistic; the writers have maintained a Homeric simplicity." This is true. When one takes down the "Iliad" and compares it in detail, one realizes how the difficulties of adapting the meter to English speech has forced upon the translators a certain elaboration and piling up of words: "bronze was the blade," where the Greek says simply *"chalkeon."* But a translation must be judged by its large effect and the present one does suggest the simplicity of the Greek, as well as the Homeric scale and resonance.

There is a good brief introduction and an index by which one can really find things. And it is surprising how well Flaxman's drawings go with this text. Obviously they have a great deal more force and imaginative vitality than recent critical fashion would have us believe. I fear that today only a reading club would read through so long a poem as the "Iliad," but there are worse things a reading club might choose to do than read aloud this vigorous translation.

E. P. RICHARDSON.

The Pastoral Care of Souls. Wendelin Meyer, O.F.M., and others. Herder. $3.00.

PASTORAL theology for modern times is expected to give new answers to old problems. They will not be found here. What this book does is to question whether the old problems have any relevancy to the care of souls in the modern world.

It is assumed that social "reconstruction" (Pius XI) means that Christian life as we once knew it has collapsed. For the "spiritual progress" (Pius XII) of the entire flock, Pius XII regarded it as his *pastoral duty* to explain the supreme beauty of the Church as the life-giving union of all the faithful in the Mystical Body of Christ. This, according to the authors, is the "profound point of view" which must be the foundation of a "rich spiritual life" for priests and people, to flower parochially in the "community Mass which [in Germany] has spread far and wide."

If preaching is to be really "effective," it will be necessary to go back to preaching "from the depth of Holy Scripture and the liturgy . . . sermons that are an integral part of the celebration" of Mass. There is need for less moralizing and defending and more unfolding of the riches of Christian life; need for a theological synthesis to augment the "pusillanimous theology" [Grabmann] of our manuals; need for teachers sensitive to the present day life of labor and business.

Still, "the paramount problem, the supreme duty, of effective pastoral care is the active participation and energetic carrying out of Catholic Action in the sense of Pius XI." The special training of a "small, select group of lay people" to be co-apostles in their particular environment is regarded as *normal* pastoral work for our times.

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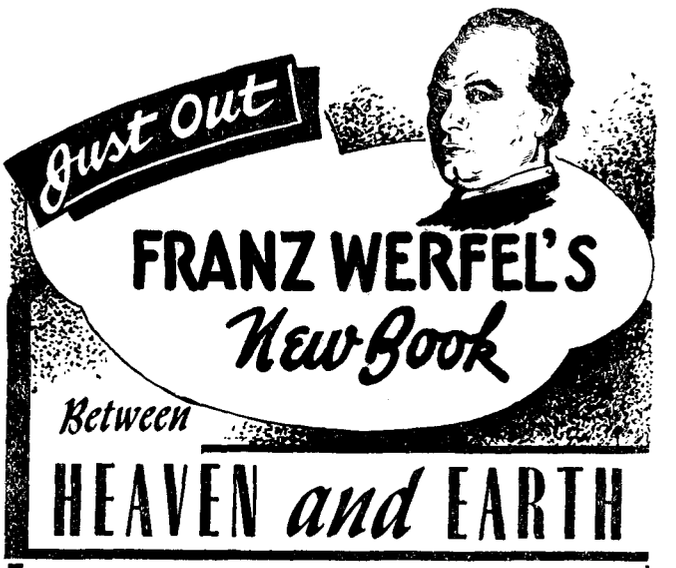
In scope this book merits praise. But it is not by any means a complete success. The reader senses that the world in which the sixteen authors of the symposium wrote—Hitler's Germany—is not being squarely faced. There is not the least mention of anti-Semitism. There are demoralizing references to such things as German blood, biological continuance, the German urge for the immense, the hereditary force of ambition in the German people, the refreshing efforts (in art) of the "leaders of our newly established German people"—all of which might be innocent enough in other circumstances. There are stout condemnations for the secularization, atomization, and mechanization of their bolshevist neighbor. But not a word about the "aggressive paganism" (Pius XI) in their midst.

DANIEL M. CANTWELL.

China's Wartime Politics. Lawrence K. Rosinger. Princeton. $2.00.

BOOKS of this sort bother me. I always want to know if the writer merely collates the results of research; or simply sees and reports, or whether he sees, understands and concludes correctly. It is deeply important to understand that "politics," in war-time or in peace, are not abstractions. Politics are the acts of men. They are not only the planned acts of forceful individuals for good or evil. They are the consequences of their acts to masses of lesser persons, on the bulk of inarticulate people. The author writes here under the auspices of the International Secretariat, Institute of Pacific Relations. An imposing title. Authoritative people. Is there any such thing as "authoritative"? Has even so earnest a body as this Institute been "authoritative," or could it have been, any time in the past fifty years? The men and women who compose it have been seekers for truth, yes. Hopeful of progress toward the best relations possible in the Pacific, yes. Understanding of the basis of such relations and successfully influential in shaping them, no. No one has been, nor could be. The downward crash of two great cultures and civilizations under the shattering impact of incredibly destructive world war is only now beginning, and still only vaguely, to open the eyes of the peoples who are part of them to reality in the relations of the segregated portions of the human race, each, literally, unknown to the other. "Politics" are mainly the misuse of the inarticulate simple man, for power. Politics result in some sort of policy. Foreign policy and domestic policy are parts of the same thing. They cannot be segregated successfully one from the other. Nations are only aggregations of human beings grouped together, preferably within natural boundaries, because they have some common root custom or aspiration. Diplomats, in "foreign affairs," are only tools good or bad, designed to build and safeguard the common needs and aspirations of the people of one nation in its relations with another. When these tools function by force for that purpose we call them war lords, dictators, aggressors. When these tools operate through intrigue we miscall them diplomats; a dangerous error. Yet, always and everywhere, you will find men of power who are trying, honestly according to their lights, to work out the best way for people to live together within nations and for the people of one nation to live with the people of another.

With that understanding, this book is a good account of what Sun Yat Sen was trying to do in China, and what Chiang Kai-shek is doing, or the Western Powers, the



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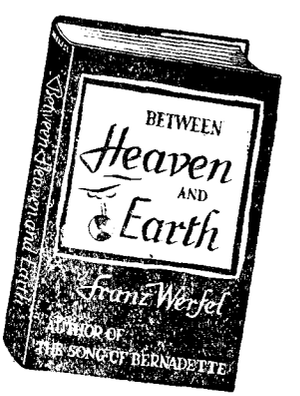

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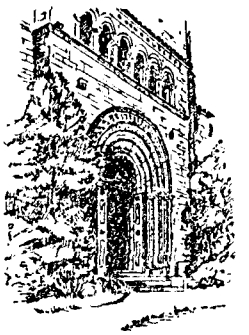

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Japanese, Chinese landlords and industrialists, the new student body of China, the vast mass of Chinese peasantry are doing—and Communist Russia. Our own American diplomacy has been ineffective because, as a people, we have not been interested. We have felt no need or urge for anything beyond trade. Consequently our good diplomatic tools have functioned in a vacuum, without the motive force of consistently effective policy. Therefore they have been useless. Our poor quality diplomatic tools have often been positively dangerous. This book is a simple and accurate statement of all these things between 1937 and 1944. I would caution, however, against any notion that the Japanese are "the aggressor." To the Chinese and to all Asia, all "western" nations are potential aggressors and indeed have been actually aggressors, in some wars.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Chedworth. R. C. Sherriff. Macmillan. $2.75.

THE last time I saw "Journey's End" was in 1929 in Munich. It had become the classic of the trenches for both Europe and America; seven companies were playing it in Germany, five in the United States, with production in ten other countries. The men in the play are certainly profoundly British but also so profoundly human as to be translatable. Mr. Sherriff's novel is the epitaph of one of the great houses in England, but the house itself seems more alive than its people.

Chedworth Castle had flourished in Cornwall under the Plantagenets until an Elizabethan Chedworth built himself a manor house and let everything medieval but the watch tower fall to ruin. The vast red brick Tudor tithe barn stood testimony of those prosperous farming days before the Corn Laws. In the eighteenth century, a Chedworth made a fortune in the East India Company and masked the Tudor manor with a vast Georgian country house in keeping with Whiggish hospitality—37 guest rooms and space for 50 servants. Chedworth House, no longer self supporting, now relied on London real estate for its house-parties and village charities, but before the first World War, the generous income had begun to shrink and the family were selling off their treasures. Taxes finished the fortune and by the end of the second World War, the Baronet, although the estate netted him £3,000, spent half the sum for repairs, a quarter for taxes and the remaining quarter couldn't quite pay for the endowed home in the village for aged pensioners. With all the portraits gone and most of the silver, Sir Derek was still mulcted for the extra benefits his tenants had been trained to expect from him.

This is the situation when Sir Derek, blinded in the RAF, brings back the young bride he met the night before singing through a blitz in a London Music Hall. We never do find out much about Peggy except that her father had been manager of some works and that she started her career by selling programs, but once she becomes Lady Chedworth she is letter perfect. With Peggy such a paragon, it might have made a livelier story if Chedworth had been described through the eyes of one of the American pilots who settle in its Tudor wing when Chedworth is taken over for an air field.

It is hard to believe that the creator of Osborne and Raleigh and Stanhope and Trotter can have drawn the bare outlines that do duty for the characters who people Chedworth. There isn't a line which has the tang of Journey's End—or the humor.

It's a pity because Mr. Sherriff's theme is that it's the

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villages and not the cities which will be the anchors for England in her storms. When Chedworth House falls apart under the blitz, Sir Derek finds himself for the first time on an honest footing with his tenants. They build the tithe barn up together, and the old feudal tradition, so long adying, is reborn in cooperation.

E. V. R. WYATT.

Built In U. S. A. 1932-1944. *Museum of Modern Art.* $3.00.

UNFORTUNATELY for the Museum of Modern Art, too many of us remember its brilliant beginnings. Last year, when the Museum threw together an exhibition of American romantic painting without stopping to think what the word *romantic* meant, a good many people sighed for the superbly organized shows of the past. Recently, when the Museum staged "Built In U. S. A.," a survey of contemporary American architecture, a good many people looked back longingly to 1932, the year Russell Hitchcock put on the never-to-be-forgotten exhibition of architecture in the international style.

The international show was a challenge—a thrilling display of the inventive powers of Le Corbusier, Miës van der Rohe, Gropius and Oud. "Built In U. S. A." is another story. It is a good exhibition, and the catalogue is a good catalogue, only if one believes that designing a building is a matter of memorizing a formula. In spite of Frank Lloyd Wright's gigantically charming "Falling Water," in spite of Richard Neutra's subtle Channel Heights housing development, in spite even of the newest American works of Gropius and Miës, "Built In U. S. A." is, all in all, about as esthetically satisfying as a sidewalk.

Is American architecture about to enter another period of decline, like that which followed the World's Fair of 1893? Back in those days the great architectural critic Russell Sturgis observed that the firm of McKim, Mead and White was "deliberately working . . . in the direction of square, bare, blank, unvaried, unmodified boxes, with holes cut in for light and air, except where a Roman colonnade is introduced. . . . I cannot but suppose that McKim, Mead and White resort to this style because it is easy to work in." The favorites of the Museum of Modern Art seem to be intent on repeating the errors of the '90's.

There is a good deal of talk in the catalogue about the type of architecture a democracy needs. Louis Sullivan, who meditated long and deeply on that particular problem, once remarked that "the lifting of the eyelids of the world is what democracy means." Apparently it means something else to the Museum of Modern Art.

WAYNE ANDREWS.

The Building of Jalna. Mazo De La Roche. Little. $2.50.

EXCEPT for the play of "Whiteoaks" I must confess to a lack of acquaintanceship with the family who are the friends of so many people all over the world, and if there remain other readers as limited as myself and who feel curious to meet characters who seem only to be rivaled by Tarzan in literary perseverance, "The Building of Jalna" seems a most appropriate point of introduction. After writing eight books about the Whiteoaks in Canada, Miss De La Roche finally discloses how they happened to settle there and to christen the fine house they reared on the primeval shores of Lake Ontario. It's a picturesque tale with introductory scenes in an

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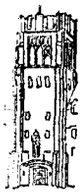

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English Deanery, an Irish country house, an Atlantic packet, old Quebec, and dominating it all is the beautiful red-haired Adeline with her elegant Captain, her parrot, her Hindu Ayah and Irish groom, poor Gussie, the baby, and Nero, the mammoth Newfoundland. The author is not deterred by improbabilities nor inhibited by the psychological preoccupations of the present or the moralizations of the past century. Although entirely dependent for her effects on rather violent action, she is like Jane Austen in that always she presents her pictures without personal comment and with a feeling for the ironic. Very different are her canvases, however, from Austen's harmonious composition and lucent colors; Miss De La Roche splashes on her paints with glowing extravagance. Fancy two young ladies out of Austen facing each other hatefully on rearing horses! Philip and Adeline have an exuberant pleasure in the good ways of life and Adeline disposing of a possible rival with a riding crop has a forthrightness refreshingly opposed to appeasement.

It must be fun for the Jalna readers to see "Gran" as she was eighty years ago. Let everyone who has time for lively storybooks hope that the creator of the Whiteoaks will follow up her mysterious allusions to admiring native princes by writing her next tale about Adeline in Jalna, India.

E. V. R. WYATT.

The Great Union. David Cort. Union Press, Washington, D. C. $1.00.

THOSE who liked and believed in Streit's "Union Now," will also like Cort's impassioned appeal for the same idea brought up to date. But to believe in Streit and in Cort means also that one has to accept their premises. The reviewer belongs to those who do not accept such reasoning as: "There is no such thing as the State. The State is not a thing." But is not the policeman, the post-office, the draft-board, and the like "such a thing?" Or again Cort is quite upset over "The Price of Sovereignty" and believes that in the forthcoming union "the language difficulties would not amount to much." History shows us that Europe has had a number of unions which eventually broke up because its members learned, much to their sorrow, that the price of lost sovereignty can also mean slow death and national extermination, and that the language difficulties play a most important role in this process. All in all, Cort, like most of his kind of peace-planners, is apt to be doctrinaire, to believe that life is far simpler than it is, and that it can be reduced to order by his "logical" premises.

JOSEPH S. ROUCEK.

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